

BEFORE THE
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN

Notification by Black Earth Telephone Company, Inc.,
That It Intends to Increase Telephone Rates

540-TR-103

NOTICE OF INVESTIGATION AND ASSESSMENT OF COSTS

On July 21, 1998, the Public Service Commission (Commission) received notification from Black Earth Telephone Company, Inc., (TDS Telecom) that it intends to modify rates for several classifications of telephone service at its Black Earth exchange in Dane and Iowa Counties. The changes include increases in prices for local service, some nonrecurring services, directory assistance, directory listings, nonpublished numbers, custom calling and advanced custom calling features, voice mail, and miscellaneous services. Some rates and charges are being reduced or eliminated. The utility served notice of the rate changes to its customers on August 1, 1998. Under § 196.215(3)(a), Stats., the proposed rates will become effective October 1, 1998. Customers have the opportunity to petition the Commission for an investigation of the utility's rate increase.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Commission will investigate this matter under § 196.215(3)(a), Wis. Stats. If the Commission receives a timely petition (by October 1, 1998) from at least 116 customers of the utility requesting that the Commission determine rates, tolls, and charges, the utility's proposed increases may still go into effect; however, the rates will then be subject to refund and further investigation will be necessary.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that the Commission deems it necessary in order to carry out its duties herein to investigate the books, accounts, practices and activities of Black Earth Telephone Company, Inc., as a public utility. The expenses incurred or to be incurred by the Commission which are reasonably attributable to such investigation will be assessed against and collected from Black Earth Telephone Company, Inc., as a public utility, in accordance with the provisions of § 196.85, Stats., and ch. PSC 5, Wis. Adm. Code.

This action is classified as a Type III action according to § PSC 4.10(3), Wis. Adm. Code. Furthermore, since no unusual circumstances have come to the attention of the Commission which indicate that significant environmental consequences are likely, neither an environmental impact statement under § 1.11, Stats., nor an environmental assessment is required.

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Questions on this matter may be directed to Tom Gross of the Telecommunications Division, at (608) 267-2337.

Dated at Madison, Wisconsin, _____

By the Commission:

Lynda L. Dorr
Secretary to the Commission

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cc: Gary Evenson, PSC